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Item 72 of the preliminary list*
Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73 of 4 December 1998, in which the Secretary-General was requested to seek the views of Member States on his report on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament of 28 July 1998 (A/53/202) and to make recommendations on possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications.

2. In a note verbale of 19 March 1999, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73. To date, the Secretary-General has received one reply. In the absence of adequate information from Member States, the Secretary-General is not in a position to make recommendations as envisaged in resolution 53/73.

* A/54/50.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/73 of 4 December 1998, paragraphs 4 and 6 of which read as follows:

> "4. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament,[1] and requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of the Member States on this report and to make recommendations on the possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications, in a report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly no later than at its fifty-fourth session;
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> ...
>
> "6. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled 'Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament'".

2. The above-mentioned report, which was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 51/39 of 10 December 1996 and 52/33 of 9 December 1997, contained an assessment of trends in selected fields of technology: nuclear technology; space technology; materials technology; information technology; and biotechnology. This was undertaken in pursuance of resolution 51/39, in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to update and further develop an earlier report dated 17 October 1990, entitled "Scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security" (A/45/568), in order to evaluate the impact of recent scientific and technological developments, in particular those which have potential military applications. In resolution 52/33, the Assembly recalled resolution 51/39 and its request to the Secretary-General to submit an updated report no later than at its fifty-third session.

3. The report of 17 October 1990 contained assessments of trends and developments in five major fields: nuclear technology, space technology, materials technology, information technology and biotechnology. The assessments were prepared by scientists who presented their papers for discussion at a high-level conference on "New trends in science and technology: implications for international peace and security" hosted by the Government of Japan at Sendai, in April 1990. The papers presented were further elaborated in the light of the discussions held there.

4. In pursuance of the request contained in resolutions 51/39 and 52/33, the experts who had prepared the original contributions for the 1990 report were requested to update their earlier assessments by providing a brief overview of broad new trends since the earlier report, specifying any new trends with illustrations where possible, and making observations on peaceful and other applications of latest developments. The updated assessments were reproduced and represented the views of the authors.[1]

II. Action taken by the Secretary-General

5. In a note verbale of 19 March 1999, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Member States to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73. To date, the Secretary-General has received one reply which is contained in the annex to the present report. Any further replies will be issued as addenda to the present document.

6. In the absence of adequate information from Member States, the Secretary-General is not in a position to make recommendations on the possible approaches to a multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use goods and technologies and high technologies with military applications, as requested in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 53/73.

Notes

[1] A/53/202.

Annex

Information received from Governments

United States of America

[Original: English]

[20 May 1999]

1. The United States continues to see no need for multilaterally negotiated, universally acceptable, non-discriminatory guidelines for international transfers of dual-use technologies with military applications. Such an instrument is unnecessary. This issue is better handled through existing arms control measures and international arrangements.